

Many Western Australians have a fascination with China, as a result of China having no representation in Australia in the 1950s and 60s there was a dearth of information available in Perth. In the Eastern States, the East Wind Bookshops filled this void. Initially, these shops provided a source of Communist literature, as well as publications from China and Russia. The magazines and books were obtained either direct from China through personal contact, or with the help of the Russian Embassy or the Communist Party. Neil MacDonald, one of our first presidents, was instrumental in organising supply arrangements for these materials.

The early literature that filtered through included leaflets, which praised the deeds of Mao Zedong and the Communist Party. Copies of the People's Daily in Chinese and later in its English version were generally available. Whilst millions of Chinese starved to death during the Great Leap Forward, these news media reported record harvests thanks to the Commune system and collective labour. Jack McLeod opened the Perth East Wind Book shop in 1973, at Wellington Street, opposite the former SEC offices, as a source of communist literature, including Chinese textbooks and literature. The China Pictorial and Chinese Literature were regarded as superb publications that were soon subscribed to by interested people from all walks of life and keenly read. Not everybody was happy at using the shop because of the range of material available, many were dubious about visiting the bookshop, as they may be branded as "communist".

Jack and his assistants were dedicated and fearless. Old Jack was lame, but on several occasions, was seen brandishing his walking stick to drive trouble makers from the shop and down the street. George Harris slept behind the shop. It did not seem to bother him that similar bookshops interstate had been firebombed. Fortunately, the worst problems were people fouling the area around the front door at night.

Management of East Wind Bookshop was taken over by the Society in 1975. The success of the bookshop was due to the volunteers. After the shops near the Perth railway station in Wellington Street were finally pulled down, the bookshop moved around the corner to 416 Beaufort Street, opposite the museum. This location was too far away from the city centre. It then moved to 42 Beaufort Street.

*Visit the AUSTRALIA CHINA FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY CENTRE*

*Room 9 1st Floor, Padbury Building*

*For your copy of:*

*Forrest Place, Perth*

*NEW CONSTITUTION OF THE P.R.C. - available in Beijing Review No 52 (27 Dec 82)*

*Australia -China Review - printed in Victoria*

*Chinese brush-painting artist's brushes, rice paper, inks, art books, prints*

*Chinese periodicals, books, novelties, soap fans, etc*

*OPEN: WED, THURS, FRI 9,30 - 3.30*

*SAT Morning 10,00 - 12 Noon*

The next move was to Forrest Place opposite the Post Office on the first floor, where the Myers Store walkway is situated now. Here it was known as the 'Australia China Friendship Society Centre'.

At this time it was decided to split the stock leaving the Chinese publications and art with the Society's bookshop and letting the Pioneer Bookshop distribute the European and Australian political books.

When this building was up for demolition the bookshop was moved to Chung Wah Lane (off James St) in Northbridge, in an area known as China Town. It occupied the shop of the current Herbalist. It had beautiful display windows and book sales flourished, especially as Guoji Shudian from Beijing sent regular supplies of free books and multiple copies of China Today and China Pictorial, a superb monthly publication in English as well as Chinese literature. Dr Wally Frick acquired 15 years' complete collection of China Pictorial, which he donated to Edith Cowan University.

The Society bookshop moved yet again to Australia Asian Association (AAA) House, where it occupied the corner shop. The revenue from the bookshop helped sustain the Society's operations.



Charles Cozins outside the bookshop in Chung Wah Lane

While AAA house was remodelled, the bookshop operated from the back veranda of Renie Yuan's home. This was the beginning of the end, as sales could only be made by mail order. By the time the Society was able to move back into AAA house, a shop front operation was no longer viable, as books on China were freely available in bookshops and libraries and as a result sales of books in the Society's bookshop declined. The bookshop operation was closed in 2008.

The success of the bookshop was due to such stalwarts of the Society as: Jack McLeod, George Harris, Charles Cozins, Marion Rosser, Renie Yuan, Pam Ellvey assisted by many others.